

Apparitions Creeping Between Venetian Blinds

By

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## **Abstract**

This manuscript contains thirty-three poems, primarily written in free verse and prose. Several poems are expressed in a hybrid form; integrated in these poems are traditional stanzas, with dialogue linked visually by text. Using a mixture of Spanish and English, many of these poems represent the culture I inhabited as a child and adolescent in south Texas. The poetry is divided into five sections: El Otro Lado, Esta Loco, Exchanges, Mementos, and Those & Them. Each section contains poems sharing common themes, representing various stages of unearthed grief.

In El Otro Lado, I mourn my displacement from south Texas. I grieve the plight of the undocumented, and remember my childhood friend, Paquita, a girl who suffered greatly across the chain link fence separating our houses. In Esta Loco, I acknowledge the reality of an abusive former spouse and mourn the pain. The third part, Exchanges, laments the communication that is so frequently misinterpreted. In Mementos, I realize an imagined bond with a brother and grieve the political climate of my son's generation. Finally, I grieve the way prejudice masquerades as ignorance in Those & Them. Nonetheless, I recognize that during the process of recovering from my grief, I celebrate my culture, my innate optimism, and my survival.

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Where I am From

I am from dust mops  
lemon scented Pledge and Crisco.

From cumbias and guapangos  
from Stetsons and balancing  
on my father's boots to keep in step.  
From Pedro Infante's ranchero ballads  
and Freddy Fender's—  
*Wasted Days and Wasted Nights.*

From the bottle of mariguana con alcohol  
it cured el reumatismo.

I am from Vicks mentholatum on the  
soles of my feet, from Alberto VO5,  
it tamed my mother's hairline.

I am from trips to la curandera.  
She cured the evil eyes  
that strangers cast upon me.

I am from *cria cuervos y te picaran los ojos*  
and *el sordo no olle pero compone.*

From sopas de fideo, picadillo,  
té de limón, y canela con leche.

Soy I am  
Soy de Ybarra, roll of the r's

fiery as Mamá's frijoles de olla.  
Roll of train cars 100 feet from  
my bedroom window.

Soy I am  
Soy del otro lado.

Soy de Tejas, daughter of seasonal fruit.  
From la pisca, poison ivy  
on women's nalgas  
from squatting to pee in the bushes.

Soy de mesquite, palm and sugar cane,  
from citrus groves that dot the landscape,  
from boganvilla and South Padre's breezes.

Soy I am  
Soy de chisme, hechicero y Catolicismo.

From bendiciones  
at the gate of a chain link fence  
as I (an only child) departed to far away places

Soy de Mamá who prayed the rosary—  
night by night.

Soy de Mamá who prayed in fear,  
I would sprout wings, turn cuervo.

Crow.



Pull them

*Pull them*

she says  
*and I'll give you*  
*a quarter*

*a peseta*  
*for each one*  
*you pull*

so I forage  
for the strands  
of silver  
that will yield me  
a cache  
of quarters

riches because  
she often tells me:

*Me tienes la cabeza*  
*llena de canas*

I am the root  
she says  
of her worries  
of her insomnia  
of her silvery hair

the roots

I pull with  
tweezers  
as I forage in the  
lush of her hair

the roots

I pull lucent  
unearth scatterings  
of silvery strands

the root  
the cause

of her silvery hair  
is my defiance  
it does not yield

## One Lost Art

i guess the *rodillo* in the emptiness of my kitchen drawer will do

i guess that *comal* also

i guess this *harina* will have to do and the *manteca*

and the shape of them on their way

the past is always coming up to me surrounding me

it's hard to imagine scalding water hard to imagine

*sal y Calumet* binding it's what I remember

the sway of flabby arms as she shaped *testales* also

and that lone daughter who watched from afar

flying

our truck gathers speed as we approach the hills of el valle and for a few seconds i am in flight  
we accelerate embark the horizon's next hill we brake drive past algodón pull to the side  
of the road terremotos on perfectly spaced rows i follow my father plucks a boll exposes  
white fibers in my palm *where clothes come from* he says fertile is my father's land

My Father Often Told Me That if I Didn't Learn Spanish, He'd Disown Me

*No daughter of mine* he'd say.

Not like those *mole* stained girls that live in Austin or San Antone.

Not like those girls whose roots to the Rio Grand are shallow.

*Sorree, but I don't speak español*, a prieta once told me in Austin.

She swayed past me in her tamale thighs and let's just say those curves  
were not the Pan Handle.

*I don't speak español*, she tells me as if the color of her skin

came from a bottle of sunshine, as if

she'd paid for her tan at the Casa del Sol.

She dismisses me as if I were la India Maria

carries on as if assimilation is one of the Ten Commandments —

Thou shall assimilate,

Speak with twisted tongues

have names that end in double "e's," "y's," or "ie."

Clotilde now Coty with a "y."

Sandra now Sandee with double "e's"

and Christina now Christie, ending "ie."

And then we have Gabriela that is now Gabrielle—

but I say ¡*Chale!*

Not my name, not my grandmother's name, don't change it

not like at the panteón, where my father took me to visit her grave

where I found the misspelling engraved in stone—Grabiela

I confront my father, throw my fists in the air.

*This is not her name.*

*This is not my name.*

*How could this go unnoticed?*

Papá, the man who had said, *no daughter of mine*  
realizes as he brings down my fists—

I had also inherited fury.

Furia en dos idiomas.

It spans two countries, a border, and the tip  
of a daughter's tongue.

Tonight

I whisper

*Licha, Licha*

to wake Mamá

to cease her snoring

and when she wakes

I pretend to be asleep

I am bored with watching geckos

cruise the fence line

their shadows on my bedroom wall

they are the size of dinosaurs

their neck sacks in pace

with Mamá's breathing

Tonight

She sleeps with me

because I have become

a sonámbula

she has caught me scaling

the venetian blinds

I wake with dust on my fingertips

She sleeps with me

because she is afraid

I will hang myself on the cords

or thrust my fists into the windows

I have also been talking in my sleep

she says

I make deals with the devil

Tomorrow

When we come across la curandera  
buying lottery tickets at the *Economy*  
Mamá will ask her to visit our house  
for a cleansing to cure  
el susto that has crazed me but

Tonight

I will lie alongside  
Mamá's outline  
still and quiet  
a paper cut-out of the moon

Note: Licha – Maria Luisa (my mother's nickname)



Assimilation

¿Porqué Mamá?

I ask on the bridge  
by the office of the  
Mexican Consulate

¿Why does Padrecito need

two hundred dollar boots?

¿Didn't Diosito wear huaraches?

¡Hocicona!

She says, pointing ahead—

this is what happens to niños

that are del diablo

and I gaze at the twenty

foot stone statue of an

Olmec child's head

¡Del diablo!

y cabezúda también

she continues hard

headed

like the stone

I am going to turn into

Si Mamá,

I tell her, yo se

but make sure you place

me, en el otro lado

on the American side

## Like Mother, Like Daughter

They drop me off at the house on Bell  
the house where Tía lives  
*Only for a few hours* they say  
they drop me off at the house on Bell

with Tía  
my godmother  
my look-alike  
(same eyes nose and chin)  
and eyelashes long  
droopy like overgrown palm  
lashes that are always being  
brushed by hands *Touch them*  
Mamá tells her comadres  
*Touch them or you will give her el ojo*

This is the house the house on Bell  
where Tía lives with her best friend

And as I enter this house I ask  
*May I watch some television*

It is Saturday morning and I never miss  
*School House Rock*  
*Land of the Lost* and *BOO*

*Si* Tía's best friend tells me  
I make myself comfortable in front of the T.V.

I am brought a glass of leche and pan de dulce  
which I devour before *BOO*

I don't want to miss the show's opening  
when the letters B O O  
                                drip in blood  
in the background a werewolf howls

Today's show is about a girl  
with special powers  
she burns her neighbor's barn  
because he calls her Evil she sets  
his barn ablaze just by thinking about it

And as the episode continues  
Tía comes to sit near me

*Bruja*

*bruja* is what I hear Tía say  
*Esa niña es bruja* and the woman  
who is Tía's best friend

the one  
that she lives with

the one  
that always finishes  
          Tía's sentences  
says—

*Tu mamá es bruja tambien*

continues on about santa muerte  
pictures of people with pin pricks  
                    on photographs  
my mother's altar  
and something about burning hair

My look-alike nods a deafening— *Si*

I pretend not to listen  
                    but I do

my eyes shut tight  
my nose purses  
my chin crinkles  
my lashes lap tears

and I do my own thinking:

*May the earth part*  
*(but only at 1106 E. Bell)*  
*And devour them both*

El Norte, Pobre crosses el Rio Grande via south Tejas

*Pobre* Mamá says I know it's my father's cue to pull over my clue we will ride home with an extra passenger

*¿Para donde vas?* Papá asks *Chicago* the stranger answers as if Illinois is a billboard on the vanishing horizon

*Bien subete* Papá says I scoot over make room for the latest stranger we will bring home

sometimes Pobre tells us where he's from when he crossed and if he paid a coyote  
sometimes he tells how he hid from la migra under toronjos and in the fields of sugar cane

but sometimes Pobre is dehydrated he saves his words until Mamá offers him a trago from an ice cold pitcher and when his throat opens he shares his dreams el trabajo he will find en el Norte and los dolares he will send back home

Mamá serves Pobre a plate of comida y las tortillas de ayer no time to make fresh tortillas  
this man has dreams no time to waste and after Pobre scrapes his plate with strips of torn tortilla Papá says *Bien te llevo para McAllen ahí coges el Greyhound*

*Gracias* Pobre answers as Papá escorts him back into our pickup truck Mamá packs tacos neatly wrapped in foil *Que vayas con Dios* Mamá tells Pobre and hands him a rolled up twenty

## The Last Supper

*espíritu fantasma aparición...my father tells me...I saw her with my own eyes...*

La Comadre Cecilia came to feed her family one last meal. A las cinco de la tarde, tortillas stacked y esponjaditas. Picadillo and a side of frijoles fritos. She placed her well seasoned molcajete at the center of the table con salsa de jitomate, and then she walked out the back door; a las cinco de la tarde        never to be seen again.

Her last words to her husband were— *Cúdame los niños.*

Her husband cries for fifty days and fifty nights; he waits; he leaves the back door wide open.  
*For when she returns,* he says.

Grieving, he neglects los niños.

Grieving, he ignores la almohada, the depression of her silhouette unseen.

He ignores the account in newsprint. Cecilia a victim of a hit and run.

He ignores her time of death— 4:58 de la tarde.

He ignores las moscas, gatos salvajes; they enter to feast on la cazuela

picadillo podrido    forsaken on the stove.

## The Harvest

caña fields whisper to those who reach

el otro lado

*descansa aquí amongst víboras y machetes*

*descansa aquí abajo de luna conjurada*

dawn the harvest begins sanctuaries ablaze

but a body can only hold so much water

fuego cannot be extinguished

by fear or flight

fierce North winds unfurl

*Dios mío*

plumaje rodea ceniza retoza  
they are difficult to distinguish

from afar

a whisper resumes

*descansa aquí far from víboras y machetes*

*descansa aquí you have reached el otro lado*

Watchtower

I.

Crusty eyed Paquita got into the carpool.  
Five minutes after the driver lay off the horn.

She sat next to me on the way to Junior High.  
She smelled of manteca, a scent I recognized  
from helping Mamá make tamales.  
Her clothes, grease splattered, and body tight.  
Donations from el Templo.

Her hair unkempt, and spotted with house paint.

Even in grade school,  
Paquita hadn't been painting pretty pictures  
in art and crafts class, she'd been painting  
houses with her parents instead.

Her attendance at school was minimal.  
She'd swear to drop out when she got  
to Junior High, but *La Ley* she'd say  
would force her to stay a few more years.  
Paquita didn't have time to do homework.  
She always had chores,  
even on the days she painted houses.

*Want to come over to play Paquita?*

I'd ask her, but she always gave  
the same answer, *I can't, Papá won't let me.*



II.

Paquita sat next to me on the way to junior high.

Five minutes after the driver lay off the horn.

Bandages on her plump arms—

manteca splatter burns.

I knew where they came from.

She'd gotten the sarten too hot last night

and I'd heard her scream in pain.

Her Mamá, called her estúpida.

Her screams, just like the ones last week

when her father had chased her outside with a whip.

*No Papí, no me pegues mas!* We'd hear her pleas

as she surrendered on the fence line.

Mamá would go next door to investigate,

she'd find that Paquita had burned a hole

in her father's shirt.

The one he wore to el Templo.

*Did Jehovah whip his children?*

I'd asked Mamá that night. *No*, she answered,

*But I will pray for her tonight.*

I wish Paquita would come over to play

I 'd give her some of my pretty pink barrettes.

I would help her with her homework.

I want to offer her some of my clothes.

Though she is younger, I know that they won't fit.

Because she is gorda.

Round and slippery, like rosary beads.

### III.

Paquita boarded a Valley Transit.  
Five minutes before it departed to Pharr.  
She came to visit Mamá at the hospital.  
She came to pray for Mamá's soul.

Her hair unkempt, glistening with beads  
of sweat, and costra de mugre on the neck.

Paquita had walked two miles.  
*The bus didn't make stops at the hospital, she said.*

*How are you Paquita, I ask as we embrace.*  
*How is your bebé, where is he? I ask*

*He died from exposure, she said.*

### IV.

Paquita has been living in Mexico.  
She married a young man from la iglesia.  
*No Vale, Mamá had said.*

But her Papá made her marry him,  
she had to follow him into Mexico.  
Mamá knew he hit.

### V.

Paquita came to my mother's deathbed.

The girl Mamá had hired to help with chores  
before she was forced to marry.

*I really don't need her help, but she needs me,*  
Mamá had said. *Anything to keep her*  
*from painting houses in this miserable heat.*

Mamá knew Paquita's father took the money  
she gave her. *Hide some*, Mamá would say.

And at the hospital, Mamá blinks in recognition  
of this girl that has come to hold her hand.

I tell Paquita that I am glad she has come.  
I tell her, *Mamá loves you.*  
Ojos del huracán.

VI.

Paquita sits next to me, on the ride back to the border.  
Hours after she came to say goodbye, and  
I wave as she crosses into el otro lado.

*Come visit me in Kansas*, I want to yell.  
But I don't, because I know what she will say—  
*I can't, he won't let me*, same as when we were kids.

Across  
the chain link fence.

## Stanley Calls Collect

What kind of a name is that anyway? I hear his name past midnight on the end of a receiver. Stanley. Collect call from Stanley. Will you accept a collect call from Stanley? I unwrap my left thigh from the bed sheet while struggling to grasp the receiver with my right hand. Will you accept a collect call from Stanley? Yes, I whisper.

My parents are in the bedroom next door and they want to know who is calling.

Nobody, I tell them - wrong number.

Stanley, what do you want? He wants to know what I am doing. I want to know why he is calling collect when he only lives six blocks from my house; he lives off Dogwood St., right across the Civic Center. I know this because I once met him there.

pock marked face crew haircut 501 Levi's black steel toe boots short stature slim güero

Stanley, what do you want? He says he is in Houston visiting his sister. He is at a bar drunk. I know this because he is slurring his words, telling me he's hanging with Chela. I tell him I am glad he is having a good time, but that I was asleep, that I can't talk with him. I tell him my parents are going to get upset.

I hang up on him.

Stanley. Collect call from Stanley. The phone rings again. Will you accept a collect call from Stanley? I reach for the receiver quickly so that the phone doesn't ring twice. Will you accept a collect call from Stanley? Yes, I whisper.

My parents are in the bedroom next door and they want to know who is calling again. Nadien.

Nobody, I tell them - wrong number again.

Stanley, what do you want? I tell him to call me once he gets back into town. He says he needs to tell me what the woman servings him drinks said - I am a goddamn good looking man. Can you believe it? A goddamn good looking man. Good for you Stanley, ask for her number.

Stanley believes himself a ladies' man. I know this because he says I must have sex with him. I am only fifteen years old, but he says he will make me feel good. He says I should come to his apartment, to the addition his Mamá has built for him above her garage.

He says he has a private entrance.

Stanley doesn't have a job; he dropped out of high school after getting expelled for beating a classmate with a desk. The classmate had to be taken to the hospital.

Stanley got a girl pregnant while in high school. He doesn't see his two year old son very often. I know this because he told me.

I hang up on him. Again.

Stanley. Collect call from Stanley. The phone rings again. I reach for the receiver quickly so that the phone barely rings. Stanley. Collect call from Stanley. Will you accept a collect call from Stanley?

No, I do not accept. I do not accept a collect call from Stanley.

I hear Stanley protesting in the background.

I hang up.

I lift the receiver and bury it beneath my pillow.

In the dark, I search for the wall plugs in both the living room and in my bedroom; I unplug both.

I unplug Stanley.

Goddamn collect calls.

Goddamn Stanley.

Goddamn Stanley's collect calls.

Stanley, you goddamn good looking man. I hope you got her goddamn number.

BBs

The Vargas boys shoot BB guns.  
Aim at us, who are playing on  
a swing set in the yard next door.  
The Vargas boys giggle  
when they hear Becky crying;  
they run into their garage to hide.  
Becky's temple a dimpled blood blemish.  
The Vargas boys have shot her in the face.

Two days later

Mamá takes me to house of these delinquents  
an abundance of avocados;  
their Mamá has invited us to harvest.  
I convince myself they will fear me  
afraid I will point my index finger  
force them to admit their evil ways  
be shamed into confessing.  
But I am the one shamed;  
the Vargas boys make fun of me  
the stupid girl who hides  
behind her Mamá's naguas.  
They take turns, concealing themselves  
behind each other, teasing me when  
the adults walk into the room next door.

But one day—

I will blossom  
like seed of subtropical fruit  
I will lure these possessors of ahuácatl  
I will wound  
I will shoot snub glances

They will pierce with more intensity  
than discharged pellets from the stiff  
barrels of boy's BB guns.

loco

esta  
loco  
mamá  
says.  
no  
hay  
divorcio  
en  
esta  
familia.  
mija,

**we all have to carry the cross**

en  
esta  
vida.  
i  
hang  
up  
the  
phone.  
i  
will  
tell  
no  
one  
else.  
nadien.



## Chingaso

He wants sopa de fideo, demands that his crema de arroz be sweetened, uses a bowl as a cup when he finds all the glasses in the sink. The sink where with one chingaso, he will break the willow-patterned plates that Mamá has passed down to me. Not one at a time, but all at once with a single furious fist; he will shatter them as they lay there neatly in a stack. He will leave my childhood cenas in scraps as I stand at the sink washing. I will reach for the stopper carefully, not to injure. Lift the shards of blue and white doves, prunus and pagodas. My tears entrapped in bubbles. Tonight. I will dream dishwater —the knife which lay at the bottom, within my reach.

## Waterline

I had hair the length of waterfalls

waves of muted sin

on the surface like phaeophyta

it swayed southerly wind

but when I left you

I severed

the flow

I cast you into a dam

*agua agua*

*traga agua*

you grow gills and

shimmer like oil spills

as you open your mouth

and command my help

the current is grave

the water is murky

I see fish

striking at flies

*agua agua*

*traga agua*

*el pez*

*el agua traga*

a carcass floats the river length

you surface

at the Gulf of Mexico

beyond the Port of Isabelle

here you lapse  
into el otro lado

*agua agua*

*traga agua*

*el pez*

*el agua traga*

y el viento

mi pelo voló

## Animal Instinct

*come out* he pleads from the end of a receiver

*come out I am in pain*

*come out* he says *our dog is dead*

*I just buried him in the desert*

i cry from the end of a receiver

the vet had said

*one year malignant lymph nodes chemo*

i cry for the dog we'd kept alive with poison

newsprint *Daily Lobo & Albuquerque Journal*

soaking the sickness spewed from every orifice

*come out*

he pleads and I answer *no*

for I had fled from this man in pain

for I had fled from this man without my dog

*come out*

he pleads but I answer *no* again

to this man who says

*I've taken the dog's misery*

a single bullet to the head

so he buries the dog in the desert

comes for me with his pain comes with a gun

## Appearances y un Refrán

In the basement, I keep a photograph of you  
a passenger in the back seat of a car smiling  
*cara vemos, corazón no sabemos*

Your right hand signals—Hook 'em Horns

Your left hand not in the picture.

....your hands eclipse my face  
huge hands huge feet huge hands huge shoes  
I stumble into shoes  
left

at the  
edge  
of our bed  
tumble

upon floor upon carpet upon teeth upon cheek upon  
hands  
upon  
a trap

your shoes: a trap  
your hands: a trap

your grip:  
Two Hook 'em Horns cozy around my neck.

your words: *you better start acting right*

your promise:  
*I will nose-dive a Cessna into your  
mother's house*

your fists:  
Retractable Hook 'em horns fling.

you punch: walls

One chingaso knocks my wind.

I wish I could lure into the crevices  
trap you inside your punched holes

I am tired of hanging posters on the wall.

I find your magazines  
glossy photographs  
a red vinyl bag

I bring out the scissors:

hand on hard on hand on cunt  
hand on breast hand on hand  
hand on ass hand on hand  
hand on hard ass on hand  
hand on hand breast on hand  
cunt on hand on hard on hand

I plaster over walls.

## Bruised Mango

Not a longing for you  
only slivers of skin  
an ache of bone  
fleshy fists  
a taste podrido

Postcards from Joan

*the shrink* she says *needs a chemical peel*  
*the shrink* she says *should not be dating his patients*

but because he makes her feel good about herself  
she fucks him

she doesn't see him much anymore  
she says *he overanalyzes*

*he lives by the airport* she explains  
he tells her she only wants him for long term parking

*what's more* she continues  
*Nachos* her cat (who only eats canned refried beans)  
*doesn't like him*

I listen to Joan as we bond sit on my childhood bed  
she wants to know her Mexican name  
*Gringa* I tell her  
as her crooked tooth loosens thru a piercing carcajada

*I want to tell you about my parents*  
Joan says *depression murder suicide*  
her father shot her mother turned the gun on himself

*your parents* she says *make me feel welcome*  
*I will visit them again I will write* she says

Joan sends postcards to my parents inscribed:

*Con Mucho Amor, Juana*



small talk: beginning with I Once Saw...  
*for B.D. Cartwright*

I Once Saw...

a man on interstate 35 wearing a gas mask. His van enveloped in fumes. The taste of exhaust.  
Lingering. On my lips. Past. Mile marker 25.

a man on interstate 35 popping a wheelie. Bump. Rock. Pebble. Pothole. And he's cruising.  
Kniefel's Big Show. In the sky.

a woman on interstate 35. Her child lay across the back windshield. The sticker on her bumper  
read: It's a life. Not a choice.

a woman at the Arc de Triomphe. Naked. She crossed the Champs Élysées. Two hundred  
eighty four steps. Twenty nine vehicles honked. Two tufts of hair. Matching. Her pair of  
shoes. Noire.

he/she said

he said

I should only wear cotton

white

cotton underwear

so I bled

told him—wash WASH

\*

she said

mete las gallinas y las matas

he wrung pescuezos

she said

ASESINO

las matas MATAS

de romero y laurel

Motor Motel (Albuquerque, NM)

we were two glances

neon Lucida

dye of sangre y sol

we were watching for ghosts

in the graveyard

parched apparitions

a gentle flood

to exhume

Desert Sands

## Watch for Signs

*Everything...*

*Everything must go!*

The auctioneer informs from his cordless microphone— Bill and Trudy Mc Allister are calling it quits. Throwing in the towel. Quitting the farm. Tomorrow, their house will be demolished. The property will be turned back into corn.

### AUCTION BILL:

FARMING EQUIPMENT: '99 New Holland 9482 Versatile Cummins M11, 12-spd.  
'91 Case Intl. Harvester 7130 Magnum, Cab, A.C., 540+1000 RPM, Duals, 3 Remotes  
John Deer: 643 Cornhead, 6 Row, Low Tin, 653 Row Head, (2) Quick Hitches,  
3 pt., Willmar 500 Fertilizer Spreader, Field Cultivator, 38' and a Ficklin CA9600 Grain Cart,  
550 Bu., Roll-Over Tarp.

GUNS & MISC.: Marlin 22 rifle, gold trigger w/scope; Bersa pistol; reloading equip; gun  
books; shells; reloading book; 12 ga. reloader; BB gun; sev. Knives; lazer sight.  
ATF Recommendations will apply KANSAS RESIDENTS ONLY.

TOOLS: 10" Table saw; Skil 16" scroll saw; concrete nail gun; router; belt sander; Craftsman  
drill press & stand; drill bits; band saw, scroll saw; welding equip.; tool box & tools; B&D  
sander; misc. tools.

ANTIQUES & COLLECTABLES: Chest of drawers; dresser; commode; gumball machine;  
Hull; Frankoma; old magazines; misc. glassware; Coke sign; beer clocks; old cookie jars; Ducks  
Unlimited framed prints; Tonka trucks; animal figurines; collectable plates; glassware; Jewel  
Tea; Military pins; other misc. antiques & collectables.

HOUSEHOLD: Glass top table & 4 padded chairs; padded bar stools; Holmes air  
purifier/ionizer; double recliner sofa; double recliner love seat; coffee & end tables; rocker;  
dresser; chest of drawers; misc. glassware & kitchen items; new quilt rack; sewing items, plant

stand; wire rack; step stool; craft items; lighted Christmas tree; children's items; toys; stuffed animals; RC cars; Matchbox cars; linens; wagon; child bag chair; lots of misc. household items.

### Refreshments by Happy Trails Chuckwagon

*Everything...*

*Everything must go!*

We rise early to inspect the wares, follow the bill's instructions: From Ottawa, KS take I-35 Exit 183 south on Highway 59 2 miles, then East on Rock Creek Road 1/2 mile. Watch for Signs.

Terms: Cash or Check w/Positive ID/Not Responsible for Accidents or Loss

HE inspects the router, band saw, air compressor, and the circular saw.

I inspect the Jewel Tea (approx. 150 pcs), etched glass window, antique picture frames, postcards, Pyrex and a Bentwood butter churn. Silk, calico, embroidery floss, and 30's flour sacks with the smell of mothballs and bacon grease.

*Everything...*

*Everything must go!*

I make my way past crocks, end tables, canning jars and silverware, to the auctioneer that is by the peach and pear trees. *You bid. You buy. You dig.*

*Everything...*

*Everything must go...*

Pea gravel, stepping stones, and the clothesline. The bricks which pave the way to the WELCOME sign on the front door ... the one that has already been sold. Even the yucca, even the yucca must go.

*Next, this yucca, the auctioneer announces.*

Yucca?? Yuccas grow in Kansas? I didn't see the yucca!! *You bid. You buy. You dig.*

I leap over ladders, garden tools and console stereos and take a last bite from my chopped beef sandwich to bid on the yucca. A magnificent yucca, the biggest yucca I've ever seen in the world! I am a fool, the only fool that wants the yucca. My yucca, the magnificent yucca is mine, mine, only mine!

SOLD! Number 21... ONE dollar!

Me: Mi Amor, you have to dig up my yucca

HE: What?

Me: The yucca, I bought the yucca!

HE: What yucca?

Me: The one in the front yard? (I grab his hand and lead)

HE: What the hell?? Do you know how big that is?? Do you know how heavy those things are??

Me: BIG

HE: Where is the baby??

Me: I love yuccas!

HE: Mi Amor, where is Javier??

HE: Javier??

Me: Oh, he's okay; he's with some grandma. She won't give him back to me. She says she loves babies. I didn't want to hurt her feelings. He is over there. (I point at some white woman, wearing a big smile, sitting and holding the baby; she looks perfectly content)

Me: I wave.

HE: Okay.

Me: What about my yucca??

HE: BIG Sigh... and another BIG Sigh.

HE: Mi Amor. little sigh. (translation —don't go buying anymore gigantic yuccas)

HE: Nods like PONG—on steroids.

HE: Heads to our SUV.

HE drives back home and returns with a shovel, and I am already tasting ... in my mind ... the yucca tacos of my childhood.

I am boiling the tender flowers to tame their bitterness. Sautéing them in garlic and onion, rolling them in a tortilla de maíz. Just like Mamá.

HE shovels vigorously. The bidders are no longer watching the auctioneer. They watch HE who is almost 3 feet deep and 4 feet wide...in a hole. HE is digging for my yucca.

I stand next to the grandma who is holding our newborn in her arms, a stranger. She rocks my baby and coos at him. She points towards HE's direction (toward the man in the 3 feet deep and 4 feet wide cavernous hole) and says, *Now that is a man in love.*

I ponder my father harvesting yucca; loppers, gloves, and shovels in the back of his Ford. *See what I brought home for you mujer*, he'd tell my mother. Two sacks in each hand.

Men bringing the tender flower—of the desert, home.

Origen  
*para Javier*

Quiero, que to quiero mucho  
que te quiero decir  
mis recuerdos vienen  
como chorros de agua inundada  
como terremotos de campo  
cosecha de espalda torcida, manos ampolladas  
y piel de amoroso sol

Quiero, que to quiero mucho  
que te quiero decir  
mis recuerdos son de un río bravo y de la tierra  
Quiero, que to quiero mucho  
que te quiero escribir

porque

Quiero, que te quiero mucho  
que te quiero decir  
sin agua y terremotos no hay raíces

porque

quiero, que te quiero mucho  
que te quiero decir  
sin agua y recuerdos no hay origen



May 11, 2000

Family and Friends, from my bay window I can see the storms as they trek from the west on their south to north journey. From our house atop a hill—sunsets, cumulonimbus, and a sparrow's nest sits on a branch of our 150 foot elm.

All is stormy.

The sky is black.

I see bursts of lightning, hear thunder and rain pour.

My mother taught me that staccato lightning bolts are called culebras.

I saw countless culebras that night.

If we had owned a weather alert radio, it would have warned:

**DAMAGING WINDS AND TORRENTIAL RAINS ARE LIKELY. GO INSIDE A STURDY BUILDING AND STAY AWAY FROM WINDOWS.**

I hear the wind roar; it travels on its north journey; I hold my 11 day old infant in my arms; he suckles on a pacifier. He is wrapped in a half yard of brushed flannel. My mother-in-law has sewn decorative floral stitches into the edges. I am telling my husband that the storm is powerful, that the howling wind reminds me of the hurricanes back home in South Texas.

I sit on my bay window, cradling my infant. I hear the wind howl, but I don't hear the sirens.

**STAY INDOORS AWAY FROM WINDOWS UNTIL THE STORM HAS PASSED.**

Family and Friends, the tornado hit at 10:00 p.m.; it touched down 50 yards north of our house. We didn't hear the sirens. Our mulberry trees at the north end of our property have lost their main branches. Our neighbors have lost their barn and the rooftop from their two story house. The tornado skipped across the road and all that is left of another house is the foundation. The tornado skipped down Suicide Hill and tore into an entire neighborhood. There were no fatalities on that day.

May 13, 2000, a 4-year-old girl died after a storm-weakened porch roof collapsed. Her grandfather was doing repairs on the roof.

THIS STORM WILL PRODUCE DAMAGING HAIL...CAPABLE OF CAUSING  
EXTENSIVE PROPERTY DAMAGE AND SERIOUS INJURY. TAKE COVER NOW!  
AVOID WINDOWS.

Family and Friends, this poem is an attempt to speak the blindness of the world. I am sitting on a bay window; I can see my television's reflection on the double pane glass.  
Are we really watching?

A TORNADO MAY FORM AT ANY TIME - TAKE COVER NOW! ABANDON MOBILE  
HOMES AND VEHICLES FOR MORE SUBSTANTIAL SHELTER. AVOID WINDOWS.

Sometimes I sit on my bay window and watch vehicles drive past; I wonder if the passengers are watching me. In the non-winter months, our house is hidden behind a blanket of forest. I feel secure.

DESTRUCTIVE HAIL CAN BE EXPECTED WITH THIS STORM - TAKE COVER NOW.  
GO TO THE LOWEST FLOOR OF A STURDY BUILDING AND AVOID WINDOWS!

I will speak to my son about safety.

My son is a Y2K baby.

Oh hopeful 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Oh hopeful.

Oh Century.

Oh when will it begin?

I sit on my bay window and observe Blackhawks, Chinooks, Apaches and F-16 fighters on their flight path to Fort Leavenworth.

Two B1 bombers once flew over our house at night; they raddled us out of bed.

A KC-135 refuels a B2 in mid-air, reminding me of the fragility of things.

Mid-flight.

A clumsy drogue dangles above a pilot's canopy.

Four air-craft are hijacked; they veer off their flight patterns.

Windows shatter as the tornado twists on its path; our windows are not damaged.

I breathe a sigh of relief.

Windows shatter from office skyscrapers; people leap to take one last breath before they die.

Family and Friends, when I heard about the first plane—it crashed into a tall building in New York City, it is 9:00 a.m.; I am at work. *Osama bin Laden*—I tell the bearer of news.

People are starting to congregate; they ask each other if they know what is going on. I tune into National Public Radio.

I talk to a friend and tell her about the 1<sup>st</sup> plane. I am jittery; she tells me not to take it too personally. I tell her my brother lives in New York City. I tell her that he has been in Spain. I tell her that he is due back into the country this week, but I cannot remember; I cannot remember which day of the week. The telephone circuits are overloaded; I cannot reach New York City.

BLOWING DUST OR DEBRIS AND SUDDEN WIND CHANGES MAY MEAN A  
TORNADO IS APPROACHING. TAKE COVER INSIDE A STURDY BUILDING AND  
STAY AWAY FROM WINDOWS.

My son is 1 year and 4 months old. I am playing *Papas y Papas* with him, the Spanish rendering of patty-cake. He is walking on our hardwood floors with his doggie walker. He giggles with each step; the doggie walker barks each time it is accelerated. My son loves donkey rides, and his first spoken word is *Papá*.

My husband and I sit and watch, ABC, CBS, CNN, MSNBC and even the FOX network for news of the attacks. I have reached my brother and he is safe. A friend that lived near the twin towers is staying at his place.

The friend, who told me not to take it too personally, learns about a grade school classmate who was on the first plane.

My co-worker whose family lives on the East Coast is thankful that she did not plan her wedding for the week of September 9<sup>th</sup>. *No one would have come*, she says.

A second co-worker is leaving work to attend a prayer vigil; she says that during times like these, one must be around like minded people.

DO NOT RUN OUTSIDE TO FIND THE TORNADO - TAKE COVER NOW! IF YOU CANNOT GET UNDERGROUND...GO TO AN INTERIOR ROOM ON THE LOWEST FLOOR. AVOID WINDOWS.

Family and Friends, this poem is an attempt to speak with the blindness of the world. I am sitting on a bay window; I can see my television's reflection on the double pane glass.  
Are we really watching?

It is March 19, 2003, George W. Bush, is speaking; the United States in invading Iraq.

Weapons of mass destruction.

DESTRUCTIVE WINDS CAN BE EXPECTED. IF YOU CANNOT GET UNDERGROUND...  
GO TO AN INTERIOR ROOM ON THE LOWEST FLOOR OF A STURDY BUILDING.  
AVOID WINDOWS!

911 attacks.

15 of the 19 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia.

During the Clinton administration, U.S. intelligence received "compelling evidence that George H. W. Bush had been the target of an assassination plot and that the plot was "directed and pursued by the Iraqi Intelligence Service."

The oil infrastructure of Iraq was rapidly seized.

The day after the attack, *BOMB THEM*... one of my co-workers yells from across her desk. My husband and I sit and watch the aftermath of the invasion. A camera pans to a couple and their baby. The baby is sucking on a pacifier— it is yellow; our son is sitting on the hardwood floor playing with a wooden train set.

People.

We are bombing people.

We are bombing real people.

From my bay window, I can watch the Fourth of July fireworks fired off in the town 8 miles away.

20 miles away, in Topeka, Kansas, the Fred Phelps clan is shopping at the local office supply store; they are stocking up on posters and permanent markers. They are giddy, planning their demonstrations at the funerals of Iraq veterans.

Thank God for IEDs

Thank God for Dead Soldiers

Pray for More Dead Soldiers

God Killed Your Sons

About the 9/11 attacks, Fred Phelps states that the attacks were God's punishment on the United States. In a September 14, 2001 sermon Phelps says, *God hates America, and those calamities last Tuesday are none other than the wrath of God, smiting fag America.*

God Hates Fags

God Hates America

Aids Cures Fags

Thank God for Sept. 11

God Sent the Fires

THESE STORMS WILL PRODUCE HURRICANE FORCE WINDS AND WILL LIKELY CAUSE WIDESPREAD DAMAGE. IF YOU CANNOT GET UNDERGROUND...GO TO AN INTERIOR ROOM ON THE LOWEST FLOOR. AVOID WINDOWS.

Are we really watching?

Do we see our reflection in the windows?

AVOID THE WINDOWS. STAY INDOORS AWAY FROM WINDOWS UNTIL THE STORM HAS PASSED.

I will teach my son to consider culebras.

I will teach my son to weather the storm.

TAKE COVER.

GO TO THE LOWEST FLOOR OF A STURDY BUILDING.

AVOID THE WINDOWS.

We Were Once Close  
*for Evaristo*

Valentine cards   letter i   dotted with miniature hearts   in red ink  
kimonos from Okinawa   lacquer inlay jewelry box   mother of pearl  
abalone shell from Honolulu   puka necklace with matching bracelet  
a muu muu   hibiscus in emerald & teal

we were once close:

para mi hermanita            you'll always be mi favorita  
to the best sister   to the one i love the most   el que la quire mucho

we were once close:

boot camp   Marine   marksman  
holding a starfish on a rocky shore   engraved steel on chain

we were once close

were once close we

once close we were

close we were once

once were we close

were we close once

we were once close:            ink fades   to blunt blush  
the dresses   purged from a closet   dangle in thrift store wire  
letters   fragile photographs   a broken Valentine

abalone on a dresser    collects keys & change

jewelry enclosed in lackluster shine    only mineral remains

natural    an iridescent nacre    on the surface of an inlay box



Not a Good Number

Can he come over to play?

Can your blue eyed, blonde haired boy,  
come over to play with my green eyed, blonde haired boy?

And the mother of the blue eyed, blonde haired boy answers:

My boy's friend Javier is here on a play date,  
but your boy is welcome to come over to join them.

[*pause*]

The mother of the green eyed, blonde haired boy asks:

Javier? Does his mother speak English?

The mother of the blue eyed, blonde haired boy answers:

Yes, of course she speaks English.

You must be confused.

Your son has met Javier before at my house, they played well together.

[*pause*]

The mother of the green eyed, blonde haired boy responds:

No, it's okay.

We can do it another day.

Three, is not a good number.

Code of Ethics

*for José Faus*

el brown nose academico  
wearing a guayabera and comfortable shoes  
peers past dandruff flakes on shoulders  
past peons and asks himself:

*¿hay alguien mas importante?*

...but don't we all shed the same cells, don't we all—  
cry when Selena is murdered by the embezzling Yolanda  
cry when a brown man is elected president  
cry when we hear Pedro Infante croon "Amorcito Corazón" for the very first time  
cry when you can't remember your Mamá's buñuelo recipe  
cry when Cesar Chavez, clutching an Aztec eagle flag yells – ¡Huelga!  
cry when Mamá tells us we are malagradecidas  
cry when we recite Corky's – *I am Joaquin*  
cry when Mamá tells our father - ¡Lárgate!  
cry when la tierra se traga el cajón  
cry as we scatter fistfuls of terremotos into the pit  
...but don't we all shed las mismas lágrimas, don't we all—  
cry when we arrive mocosos into this world  
cry when el fin approaches wearing the same dirty calson

Cuca's Heat

sepia  
burnt  
burnished  
crispy  
slick  
feelers

airborne

across *la cocina*

reverberating in mid flight onto  
arms lips cheek and neckline

stash the tortillas  
discard scraps of fajita  
left in the dog's greasy bowl

antennae  
mandibles  
wings  
nymphs  
compound eyes  
droppings

from a battery casing  
in the candy red radio  
from a toaster  
and the box of Cocoa Puffs

fly  
leap  
crawl  
scatter

when you open kitchen cabinets  
silk linen drawers and  
disturb the trash

lift damp sponges  
wet wash cloths  
a boot  
where toes tunnel

inside  
beneath  
*arriba*  
*abajo*  
behind  
between  
*día*  
*noche*

your house is clean  
    but they come  
spray bomb set out the motels

laugh tomorrow when the dog  
    limps from under a table  
sticky appendage on its left paw

it's about movement  
it's about survival

it's about finding your way  
from crevasses to places  
    you are not welcome

it's about heat  
it's the way of the heat

humidity  
    ungluing linoleum tiles

humidity  
    sealing layers of clothing

humidity  
    exposing carcass & skin

(FOUND POEM)

*Dear People:*

*[...] I bumped into two events of which I had not been aware. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, Loretta and Harley had a break-in. A man entered their kitchen through the rear door while Loretta was crocheting in the living room. Harley was in his room with the door closed. This occurred at about 8:30 AM. The intruder took 2 cameras, a Swiss pocket knife, and 2 cartons of cigarettes. The intruder was caught in Enid OK. Harley got some of his property back. The intruder is a Hispanic from Texas.*

man=intruder=Hispanic=hispanic=his=panic=panic=his=hispanic=Hispanic=intruder=man

my father was a man my brother was a man my husband was a man

my father was a hispanic my brother was a hispanic my husband was a hispanic

my father was a man was a hispanic

my brother was a man was a hispanic

my husband was a man was a hispanic

they did not steal

my cousin is a hispanic my neighbor is a hispanic my teacher is a hispanic my mail carrier is a hispanic my classmate is a hispanic my dog is a hispanic my grocer is a hispanic my ego is a hispanic my friend is a hispanic my papacito is a hispanic my dentist is a hispanic my butcher is a hispanic my knight in shining armor is a hispanic my banker is a hispanic my politician is a hispanic my compadre is a hispanic my cat is a hispanic my boyfriend is a hispanic my lover is a hispanic my nurse is a hispanic my child is a hispanic mi amor is a hispanic my priest is a hispanic my sex is a hispanic my waiter is a hispanic my counselor is a hispanic my doctor is a hispanic my lifeguard is a hispanic my roommate is a hispanic my get-up is a hispanic my lawyer is a hispanic my mechanic is a hispanic my veterinarian is a hispanic my hijo is a hispanic my librarian is a hispanic my clerk is a hispanic my enemy is a hispanic my firefighter is a hispanic my cousin is a hispanic my countenance is a hispanic my darling is a hispanic my landlord is hispanic my broadcaster is a hispanic

they do not steal

Mosquitoes

My father used to say:  
They only bite—*los que son de dulce*.  
I must be *piloncillo*.

*The intruder is a Hispanic from Texas.*

I am a Hispanic  
I am from Texas  
I am the intruder

I steal cameras chain smoke cartons of cigarettes

¡Wachate! te chingo con filo

*Loretta says that they now keep their doors locked. The wrong part of the big cities have come to Stillwater. Another **invasion** had happened back when Herman was alive. I failed to take notes on this part of our conversation.*

*This is it for this broadcast.  
We love all of you.  
Jim and Irene*

My father in law only sports a flat top and polo shirts with pockets

Doesn't like to inject himself with insulin, but when his wife who has been his nurse for the past forty-five years injects him in a different spot than is expected, he complains.

She tells him change is good, but I know she doesn't believe what she says; she wears black and white tinted glasses.

Change is good, but the venetian blinds have been at a 45° angle for the past twenty-one years, or even longer. I've only been in this family for two decades.

The sitting room has never seen daylight because the shades have never been drawn. The shades have never been drawn; the windows have never been opened because the neighbors to the North might peek inside. They will want to steal from them.

Change is good, but the venetian blinds in the kitchen window at a deliberate 45° angle, safe enough to observe the neighbors to the North, take notes for city complaints:

cats come into their yard to take a shit

dogs bark too much, too many

trash in backyard, motor oil containers, beer cans and bottles

cars, dismantled on blocks

trash bags piled high on the porch

the lawn has gone to seed

too many Harleys

They don't speak to the neighbors to the North, not since...the woman of the house was married to her ex husband, since her son joined the Army, vowed never to return.

They don't speak to the neighbors to the North, not since the woman next door took in a new husband.

Not since this house is a meth house they say, the proof is the patch of grass where the snow and ice melts in the winter....a hidden room underground ... they say... where the neighbors mix and cook... acetone, alcohol, ammonia, muriatic, battery, and sulfuric acid.

the house to the North is a ticking time bomb

When the police come to arrest the new man of the house, apprehended for cocaine possession, they say from behind the venetian blinds. *Lock him up. Throw away the key.*

They've never spoken to this man, who has never wronged them in any way...never expletives across the chain link fence, no evil eyes...

no malice...unlike my mother in law...who in the cover of night, sprays weed killer on their bamboo, blades invading her driveway. She sprays the weed killer on the chain link fence because the honeysuckle is invasive.

She composes the letters for the city. He licks the stamp. He licks the envelope. He delivers their letter to the post office. They are accomplices.

They don't know their neighbors to the North well, but they are like *those*... good for nothing, scum, drunks, drug addicts, living off the government...*those*...they are niggers you know ...cause there are all kinds of niggers you know

yellow, brown, red...black and white niggers, my father in law says all kinds of niggers niggers, they come in all kinds of shades...them niggers

In silence, I sit in my father in law's kitchen, scoop forkfuls of homemade blueberry pancakes. I face north. Squint. Distort metaphors. Witness shades, apparitions creeping between venetian blinds.



## Glossary

abajo – down, beneath, below

abajo de luna conjurada – under a conspirator moon

academic – academic

agua – water

ahí coges el Greyhound – there you can catch a Greyhound bus

ahuácatl – Nahuatl word for aguacate, which means avocado in Spanish. A second definition is  
testicles (the shape of an avocado)

algodón – cotton

A las cinco de la tarde – at five o'clock

almohada – pillow

aparición – apparition

arriba – up

asesino – murderer

bendiciones – blessings (sign of the cross)

bien – okay

Bien subete – okay, get in (into the truck)

Bien te llevo para McAllen – okay, I will take you to McAllen

boganvilla – bougainvillea

bruja – witch

buñuelo – fried flour tortilla with cinnamon & sugar

cabezúda – stubborn (hard headed)

calson – underwear

canela con leche – cinnamon tea with milk

caña – sugar cane

carcajada – burst of laughter

cara vemos, corazón no sabemos – appearances are deceiving

Catolicismo – Catholicism

cazuela – clay cooking pot

¡Chale! – Hell no! (slang)

Chela – short for cerveza, also a woman's name

cenas – dinners

## Glossary

ceniza retoza – ashes frolic

Chicklets – Mexican gum

chingaso – physical blow (from fist)

chisme – gossip

cocina – kitchen

comadres – female friends

comal – griddle (cast iron)

comida – food

Con Mucho Amor – with love

costra de mugre – crusty dirt

crema de arroz – cream of rice

cría cuervos y te picarán los ojos – raise crows and they will gouge your eyes

Cuca – short for cucaracha (cockroach)

cuervo – crow

Cuidame los niños – take care of the children

culebras – staccato lightning bolts and snakes

cumbias and guapangos – styles of Mexican music

curandera – healer, witch doctor

de la tarde – in the evening

del otro lado – from the other side (north of Rio Grande river)

descansa aquí – rest here

día – day

diablo – devil

Dios mio – oh my God

Diosito – Jesus

dolares – dollars

dolor – pain

el otro lado – the other side (north of Rio Grande /death)

el que la quire mucho – the one who loves her the most

el sordo no olle pero compone: the deaf person can't hear, but he sure can tell tall tales

Esa niña es bruja – that child is a witch

## Glossary

espíritu – spirit

esponjaditas – fluffy

estupida – stupid

fantasma – phantasm

favorito – favorite

frijoles de olla – beans cooked in a Mexican clay pot

fuego – fire

furia en dos idiomas – fury in two idioms

gallinas – chickens

gatos salvajes – wild cats

gorda – fat

gracias – thank you

Gringa – caucasian girl

guayabera – men's shirt (Cuban style)

güero – light skinned

harina – flour

¿hay alguien mas importante? – is there anyone more important?

hay que portarse bien – one must comport

hechicero – witchcraft

hijos de las calle – children from the street (beggars)

¡Hocicona! – foul mouthed

huaraches – Mexican sandals

¡Huelga! – Strike!

iglesia – church (Jehohav's Witnesses)

India Maria – name used to refer to South/Cental Am. Indian women (beggars)

¡Lárgate! – leave

las mismas lágrimas – the same tears

la tierra se traga el cajón – when the earth devours the casket

leche – milk

ley – the law

loco – crazy

## Glossary

los que son de dulce – those that are the sweetest  
malagradecidas – ingrate  
manteca – lard  
mariguana – marijuana  
matas – double definition (plants and to kill)  
mete – bring inside  
Me tienes la cabeza llena de canas – you have filled my head with gray hair  
mierda – feces  
mija (mi hija) – my daughter  
migra – immigration officer  
mocosos – booger faced  
mole – Mexican chocolate chili sauce  
moscas – flies  
mujer – woman  
nadien – nobody  
naguas – petticoat  
nalgas – buttocks  
niños – children  
noche – night  
no hay divorcio en esta familia – there is no divorce in this family  
No Papí, no me peges mas – no father, don't beat me anymore  
Norte - north  
no vale – he is worthless  
ojo – evil eye  
ojos del huracán – eyes of the hurricane (teary eyes)  
otoño – Fall  
¡otra vez! – again  
Padrecito – Catholic priest  
pan dulce – Mexican sweet bread  
panteón – cemetery  
papel – paper

## Glossary

Para donde vas? – where are you headed?

para mi hermanita – for my little sister

Pedro Infante – famous Mexican singer

pelo – hair

peseta – quarter

pez – fish

phaophyta – brown algae

picadillo – Mexican ground beef and potato dish

piloncillo – brown sugar cone

pisca – harvest of crops by farm workers

plumaje rodea – plumage encircles

Pobre – poor, and also a poor person, a poor soul in this case

podrido – rotten, putrid

porqué – why

Que vayas con Dios – may God go with you

Ranchero – country style music

rebozo – shawl

refrán – refrain

reumatismo – rheumatism

rodillo – rolling pin

romero – rosemary

Sabritas – Mexican brand of chips

sal – salt

salsa de jitomate – tomato salsa

salvajes – wild

sangre y sol – blood and sun

santa muerte – holy death

sarten – griddle

sin vergüenza – shameless

si se puede – yes we can

sonámbula – sleepwalker

## Glossary

sopas de fideo – Mexican pasta dish  
soy – I am  
susto – fear, witchcraft spell  
te chingo con filo – I cut you to pieces  
té de limón – lemon tea  
Tejas – Texas  
templo – temple  
terremotos – clumps of dirt  
Tejas – Texas  
Tía – aunt  
te chingo con filo – I cut you to pieces  
terremotos – lumps of dirt  
testales – tortilla dough biscuits  
toronjos – grapefruit trees  
tortillas de harina – flour tortillas  
trabajo – job  
traga agua – drink water, but in this case, drown  
trago – drink  
Tu mamá es bruja tambien – your mother is also a witch  
valle – valley (South Texas)  
víboras – snakes  
vida – life  
viento – wind  
voló – flew  
Wachate – watch yourself (Spanglish)  
y las tortillas de ayer – and yesterday's tortillas  
you se – I know